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ministers fighting duels. There are more reasons in favor of duelling than of war; and since the former is so fast or so surely slinking away from the civilized world, why may we not hope to see the custom of war ere long melting away from all Christendom?

#### NECKER ON WAR.

M. Jaques Necker (b. 1732, d. 1804) was a native of Geneva, whence he went in his youth to Paris, and was so successful as a banker that he retired from business with a large fortune at the age of thirty-two, and subsequently became famous as a statesman, a financier and an author. He was a Minister of Finance under Louis XVI.; and such was his reputation, that of his work on the *Administration of the Finances*, no less than 80,000 copies were sold in a few days. From this work we select the following:—

With what impatience have I wish'd to discuss this subject! How irresistibly has my heart been led to expatiate on the evils which are ever attendant on this terrible calamity! War, alas! impedes the course of every salutary plan, exhausts the sources of prosperity, and diverts the attention of governors from the happiness of nations. It even suspends, sometimes, every idea of justice and humanity. In a word, instead of gentle and benevolent feelings, it substitutes hostility and hatred, the necessity of oppression, and the rage of desolation.

The first idea that occurs to me when reflecting on the origin of most wars, is, that those great combinations of politics which have so often kindled the torch of discord, and occasioned so many ravages, have very seldom merited all the admiration that has been so lavishly bestowed upon them. I have also been forcibly struck with this consideration, that most governments appear satisfied, if at the conclusion of a bloody and expensive war, they have made an honorable peace; but each should consider what would have been its situation at the period when the treaty was concluded, if war had not interrupted the course of its prosperity.

Let us suppose France obliged to alienate from fifty to sixty million francs of its annual revenue for the prosecution of a given war; and let us next take a cursory view of the different uses to which such a revenue might have been applied, not only for the advancement of the national happiness, but for the augmentation of the military force. With eighteen millions of that annual revenue, the regimental companies might have been completed to their full compliment, and the army augmented by fifty thousand infantry, and ten or twelve thousand horse. Two millions of that revenue would pay the interest of a loan of forty millions, which would have added to our navy thirty men-of-war, and a proportionate number of frigates; and this augmentation might have been maintained by four millions yearly. Thus we see twenty-four millions of that revenue devoted solely to the military service.

Let us now apply the surplus to the various parts of administration, and consider the result. With eighteen millions yearly, the price of salt might have been rendered uniform throughout the kingdom, by reducing it one-third in the provinces of little gables, (the excise on salt,) and two thirds in those of the great; and not increasing the charges of the privileged provinces with from four to five millions annually, the interior parts of the kingdom might have been freed from all custom-house duties with 2,500,000 livres, all the necessary canals might have been executed, that are still wanting in the kingdom. With one million more per annum, government might be enabled to

bestow sufficient encouragement on all the establishments of industry that can advance the prosperity of France. With 1,500,000 livres, the sums annually destined to give employment to the poor, might be doubled; and, while great advantages would thus accrue to the inhabitants of the country, the neighboring communications might be multiplied. With the same sum, the prisons throughout the kingdom might in a few years be improved, and all the charitable institutions brought to perfection. And with 2,000,000 annually, the clearing of the waste lands might proceed with incredible vigor. These distributions amount to thirty-one millions, which, joined to twenty-four millions for military expenses, make together the annual revenue of fifty-five millions employed as above; a sum equal to that which I have supposed to be alienated for the disbursements of the war.

Nor is this all; for, if we estimate the diminution of commerce which results from a war of five or six years' duration, it will be found that the kingdom is deprived of a considerable increase of riches. In fine, war, and the loans which it occasions, create a very sensible rise in the rate of interest. On the contrary, peace, under a wise administration, would lower it annually, were it only in consequence of the increase of specie, and of the influence of the stated reimbursements. This successive reduction of interest is likewise a source of inestimable advantages to commerce, agriculture, and the finances.

Let these effects be now compared with the advantages which a fortunate war (and all wars are not so) would secure; and it will be found that ten seeds have been sown, in order to gather the fruit of one. A government may humble its rivals, and extend its dominions; but to employ its resources for the happiness of its subjects, and command respect without the assistance and dangers of an ever restless policy, is a conduct which alone can correspond to the greatness of its situation, or secure all the advantages to be derived from it. It is not war, but a wise and pacific administration, that can procure all the advantages of which France may be yet in want. The quantity of specie in the kingdom is immense; but the want of public confidence very often occasions the greater part of it to be hoarded up. The population of the kingdom is immense; but the excess and nature of the taxes impoverish and dishearten the people. The revenue is immense; but the public debt consumes two-fifths of it. The contributions of the nation, in particular, are immense; but it is only by the strengthening of public credit, that government can succeed in finding sufficient resources in extraordinary emergencies. Finally, the balance of commerce in favor of the kingdom is an immense source of riches; but war interrupts the current.

What, then, would be the case, if we join to all these considerations, the calamities inseparable from war? How would it appear, should we endeavor to form an estimate of the lives and sufferings of men? In the midst of a council convened to influence the opinion of the sovereign, the most upright of his servants might address him in this language:—

'Sire, war is the source of so many evils, it is so terrible a scourge, that a gracious and discerning Prince ought never to undertake it but from motives of justice that are indisputable; and it behoves the greatest monarch in the world to give that example of the morality of kings which assures the happiness of humanity, and the tranquillity of nations. Do not give way, Sire, to vain anxieties, or to uncertain expectations. Ah! what have you to fear, and what can excite your jealousy? You reign over 26,000,000 of men. Providence, with a bountiful hand, has diffused the choicest blessings through your empire by multiplying

the productions of every kind. The war proposed will cost you eight or nine hundred millions ; and, were even victory every where to follow your arms, you will devote to death, or cruel sufferings, so great a number of your subjects, that were any one, who could read futurity, to present you this moment with the list, you would start back with horror. Nor is this all ; your people, who have scarcely had a respite, you are going to crush with new taxes. You are going to slacken the activity of commerce and manufactures, those inestimable sources of industry and wealth ; and, in order to procure soldiers and seamen, the men accustomed to the cultivation of the earth, will be forced from the interior provinces, and a hundred thousand families deprived of their supporters.

' And when crowned by the most splendid success, after so many evils, after so many calamities, what may you perhaps obtain ? An unsteady ally, uncertain gratitude, an island more than two thousand leagues from your empire, or some new subjects in another hemisphere. Alas ! you are invited to nobler conquests. Turn your eyes to the interior parts of your kingdom. Consider what communications and canals may still be wanting. Behold those pestilential marshes which ought to be drained, and those deserted lands which would be cultivated on the first tender of support from government. Behold that part of your people whom a diminution of taxes would excite to new undertakings. Look, more especially, on that other truly wretched class, who stand in immediate need of succor in order to support the misery of their situation. In the meantime, in order to effectuate so many benefits, a small part of the revenues which you are going to consume in the war to which you are advised, would perhaps be sufficient. Are not the numerous inhabitants of your extensive dominions sufficient to engage your paternal love ? And is not their happiness equal to the greatest extent of good which it is in the power of a single man to perform ?

' But if you are desirous of new subjects, you may acquire them without the effusion of blood, or the triumphs of a battle ; for they will spring up in every part of your empire, fostered by the beneficent means that are in your hands. A good government multiplies men as the morning dews of the spring unfold the buds of plants. Before you seek, therefore, beyond the ocean, for those new subjects which are unknown to you, reflect that, in order to acquire them, you are going to sacrifice a greater number of those who love you, whom you love, whose fidelity you have experienced, and whose happiness is committed to your protection.

' What personal motive, then, can determine you to war ? Is it the splendor of victories for which you hope ? Is it the ambition of a greater name in the annals of mankind ? But is renown confined to bloodshed and devastation ? And is that which a monarch obtains, by diffusing ease and happiness throughout his dominions, unworthy of consideration ? Titus reigned only three years ; and his name, transmitted from age to age by the love of nations, is still introduced in all the eulogies of princes.

' Do not doubt it, Sire, a wise administration is of more value to you than the most refined political system ; and if, to such resources, you unite that empire over other nations which is acquired by a transcendent character of justice and moderation, you will enjoy at once the greatest glory, and the most formidable power. Ah ! Sire, exhibit this magnificent spectacle to the world ; and then, if triumphal arches be wanting, make the tour of your provinces, and, preceded by all the good you have diffused, appear surrounded by the blessings of your people, and the ecstatic acclamations of a grateful nation made happy by its sovereign.'

Such would be the language of an honest minister ; nor can I believe that such reflections would be foreign to political deliberations. At first, they would be thought extraordinary, and the minister who should argue thus, would not be allowed the views of an enlightened statesman. But the minister who, devoid alike of fear and every selfish view, should dare to advance great truths, might perhaps force his way through prejudice, or habitual ideas.

Ideas of this kind have a most extensive influence. I cannot remember without shuddering to have seen the following statement in an estimate of the money requisite for a war : —

Forty thousand men to be embarked for the colonies. 40,000  
To be deducted  $\frac{1}{3}$  for the first year's mortality. 13,333

Remainder 26,667

A clerk in his office makes his calculation in cool blood. A minister, on the perusal, has seldom any other idea than of the expense, and turns with unconcern to the next leaf for the result of the whole.

How can one here refrain from indulging very melancholy sensations ? Alas ! if by any law of nature unknown to me, mankind deserved so much indifference, I should be very wrong to write, and to be so earnestly solicitous for their welfare. I should be myself but a vile heap of dust, which the wind of life agitates for a moment. But I entertain a more exalted idea of our existence, and of the spirit that informs it.

WAR-CHRISTIANS. — We fear there are many reputed Christians of this sort ; and it would be amusing, were it not so revolting a burlesque on the Christian name, to see how they talk on the subject. They believe in the beneficial influence of war upon the nations engaged in it, and attempt to justify it ! The Crimean war, of which nearly all its abettors are now ashamed, they regard as a model. " War-Christianity," we are told, " dates its origin from the beginning of the Crimean war. This was the first great war in which England had been engaged for forty years. It broke the spell of peace, and produced a vivid effect on the imaginations of many as the *harbinger of a new and better era !* in which the commercial spirit was doomed to grow fainter, and chivalry, bravery and honor were once more to rule the world !" This war, instead of being regarded as something *un-Christian*, as an evil at the best designed to check other and worse evils, as a sad calamity to mankind, was regarded as something *eminently Christian* and useful, as one of the best helps that a kind Providence could send to forward men on their perilous path to Heaven ! It was the corrective needed by pious souls against the snares of filthy lucre ! Men are better, and nations are better, if they fight than if they do not ! more noble, more God-fearing, less selfish and earthly !!

A great war does afford some opportunities for noble self-denial and devotion, and does to some degree divert the minds of the people from the engrossing pursuit of wealth to take an interest in the affairs of the nation. But the same might be said of any other great national calamity, such as the cholera, a famine, or an earthquake. Any one of these would call into exercise the virtues of generosity, self-denial, and public feeling ; and it would be quite as reasonable to endeavor to produce the cholera by neglecting sanitary precautions, as to maintain a quarrelsome attitude among nations in hope of getting into war. Indeed, such a national calamity as the cholera or a general famine would produce all the *good effects* of a war without the preponderating evils of the latter — all the bravery, sympathy, and self-denial, without the passion, cruelty, and revenge.